

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

August 13, 2008 Meeting

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Robin Gumpert

Notes: Erin Halton

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the "record" of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

Review of Minutes/Agenda

The 7/30 official meeting minutes/facilitator notes had been posted to the web. No further changes were made to the notes during the meeting and they were considered final. The 6/1 official meeting minutes/facilitator notes and 6/6 facilitator notes had been posted to the web and TMT will look to finalize them at the 8/27 TMT meeting.

2008 Summer Treaty Fishing Review

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, referred TMT to a 2008 Summer Treaty Fishing review document posted as a link to the TMT agenda. Dittmer noted that the elevation requests for the season were met 83% of the time at Bonneville, 77% of the time at The Dalles and 99% of the time at John Day. Fluctuations were kept to a minimum and preliminary catch estimates were 9,000 summer Chinook and 9,000 sockeye. CRITFC commended and thanked the COE and others for their efforts to hold the pools as steady as possible and provide good fishing conditions.

Action/Next Steps: Dittmer said the COMPACT meeting was scheduled for the afternoon of 8/13 and that he would communicate any Autumn Treaty Fishing SOR's to TMT as they are developed. Autumn Treaty Fishing will be on the agenda for the 8/27 TMT meeting; Dittmer said he would confirm catch numbers for the summer season at that meeting.

Dworshak Operations Update

Steve Hall, Walla Walla District COE, reported that Dworshak was currently at elevation 1563.9', with outflows in the range of 14.5-14.6 kcfs. The project was passing inflows of 1.8 kcfs through the Regulating Outlets and 9.8 kcfs through the spillway. Dworshak release temperatures were in the range of 48.5-49°, and Hall reported that the project was tracking well toward achieving the 1535 foot end of August target elevation. TDG levels were in the range of 107-109% and being closely monitored in order to stay below the 110% Idaho TDG criteria. Tracey Schwartz, COE, referred TMT to current and historical temperature data graphs posted as links to the agenda, noting that there would be a drop in temperatures observed at Lower Granite within the next day or two, as a result of the slight drop in Dworshak outflow temperatures on 8/8. (*Note: later during the meeting, Lower Granite temperatures were noted as dropping slightly, to 66.8°.*) Schwartz clarified that the forecasted higher temperatures for the next few days were not

fully accounted for in the modeling, but added that a few days of high temperatures were not expected to impact modeling results. Jim Adams, COE, noted the Dworshak forebay thermocline data showed slightly warmer water being drawn from units than in the three previous years. Adams said that the COE expects the flows over the spillway will end sometime around August 22-24th, resulting in cooler temperatures, and that the RO gates will be positioned as necessary to manage outflow temperatures per Dworshak hatchery targets.

Action/ Next Steps:

- As long as temperatures remain fairly steady, the COE will hold outflows in the range of 14.5 kcfs, targeting 1535 feet end of August while closely monitor temperature and TDG levels.
- The COE planned to correct a typo on the “DWR Release 2008” graph and repost it to the agenda.
- Dworshak Operations Update will be to the agenda for the 8/27 TMT meeting; if any issues arise in the interim, TMT could convene a conference call on 8/20.

NOTE: *Jim Adams, COE, said that Cathy Hlebechuk and Dan Feil will serve as the COE’s TMT contacts during the next two week, until September 2.*

Libby/Hungry Horse Operations

Joel Finolio, Seattle District COE, reported that Libby outflows were at 8 kcfs (the bull trout flow minimum) and targeting an end of August elevation of 2441.8'. Tony Norris, BPA, reported that the Libby/Arrow Swap agreement had been signed by all parties. John Roache, BOR, reported that Hungry Horse was at an elevation of 3549.43', with outflows of 6.4-6.5 kcfs; he added that the BOR did not expect any decrease in outflows as the project continues to draft through the end of August. Hungry Horse is forecast to draft to around elevation 3540.3 feet by August 31 with the current discharge and using this week’s 50% ESP inflow trace

Action/Next Steps: The COE planned to post the final, signed Arrow/Libby swap agreement, per TMT request, as a link to today’s agenda.

McNary Transport

Dan Feil, COE, reported that per the Fish Operations Plan, there will be a shift to truck transportation on 8/17, as 8/16 is an “off” day for transportation.

Timing for End of MOP: Discussion of end of MOP operations on the Lower Snake was deferred to the 8/27 TMT meeting.

Next Steps: Timing for end of MOP will be determined by adult and juvenile passage data; this item will be discussed at the 8/19 FPAC meeting and the 8/27 TMT meeting.

Operations Review

Reservoirs: Grand Coulee was at elevation 1283.9' and drafting to a target elevation 1280' by the end of August. Hungry Horse was at elevation 3549.43' with outflows in the range

of 6.4-6.5 kcfs. Libby was at elevation 2442.8', with inflows of 8.7 kcfs and outflows of 8.1 kcfs. Lake Pend Oreille was at elevation 2062.3'. Seven day average in-flows at Lower Granite were 40 kcfs, McNary flows were 134-135 kcfs, and Bonneville flows were 135 kcfs.

Fish: Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported that subyearling numbers were in the couple hundred per day range at Lower Granite, Lower Monumental and Little Goose. Adult passage numbers were picking up at Bonneville and Fall Chinook were tracking close to the 10 year average. Sockeye counts continued to be strong; Russ Kiefer, ID, noted optimism for higher sockeye numbers in the Idaho basin than seen in previous years and added that genetic sampling and adult releases are underway to support natural spawning / sockeye production.

Power System: Nothing to report at this time.

Water Quality: Jim Adams, COE, reported a few exceedances at the Camas/Washougal gauge but noted TDG was at 112.2% as of 8/13. He also clarified the “dead zone” effect sometimes observed as projects transition between one and two unit operations and gave TMT a heads up that this could result in slight fluctuations in flows.

Other: Dan Feil, COE, gave TMT members a head’s up that the B2 corner collector is scheduled to be closed on the 9/2. (The outage could occur anytime after midnight August 31, per the FOP.)

8/27 Face to Face Meeting

Agenda items will include:

- Finalize notes/minutes
- Autumn Treaty Fishing
- Dworshak Operations
- Libby/Hungry Horse Operations Update
- Timing for End of MOP on the Lower Snake
- Lower Granite MOP Operations
- Operations Review

**Columbia River Regional Forum
Technical Management Team Meeting
Aug. 13, 2008**

1. Introduction

Today's TMT meeting was chaired by Jim Adams (COE) and facilitated by Robin Gumpert (DS Consulting) with representatives of COE, USFWS, NOAA, BOR, BPA, CRITFC, Idaho, the Nez Perce Tribe and others participating. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at the meeting. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should provide them to the TMT chair or bring them to the next meeting.

2. Review of Meeting Minutes

Facilitator's notes and official minutes for the Aug. 1 and Aug. 6 TMT meetings will be finalized at the next TMT meeting on Aug. 27.

3. 2008 Summer Treaty Fishing Report

Kyle Dittmer (CRITFC) gave a review of the 2008 summer treaty fishery. The tribes fished for 6 weeks and submitted 4 SORs to the Action Agencies. Each SOR requested two basic conditions – stable elevations and stable fluctuation bands during each week of the fishery. The COE responded with a commitment to a 1.5-foot hard constraint and a 1-foot soft constraint. In terms of hourly compliance with the 1-foot band soft constraint:

- Bonneville pool had an 83% rate of compliance, 7% less than the same time last year.
- The Dalles pool had 77% compliance, 7% less than last year.
- John Day pool had 99% compliance, 1% less than last year.

In terms of hourly compliance with the 1.5-foot band hard constraint:

- Bonneville pool had 100% compliance, the same as last year.
- The Dalles pool had 91% compliance, 4% less than last year
- The John Day pool had 100% compliance, the same as last year.

Approximately 80% of the nets this year were split between Bonneville and John Day pools, Dittmer pointed out. In terms of pool elevation changes:

- The Bonneville pool fluctuated 0.2-2.0 feet, about the same as last year.
- The Dalles pool fluctuated 0.2-2.0 feet, about the same as last year.
- John Day pool fluctuated 0.1-0.9 feet, about the same as last year.

Preliminary counts show the tribal fishers caught 9,000 summer Chinook and 9,000 sockeye, with platform fishery data still coming in. CRITFC has found no direct correlation between pool elevations and loss of nets. The losses are probably due to vandalism and theft.

In response to questioning, Dittmer said he would look into why tribal fishers didn't catch more sockeye, given this year's unusually plentiful runs. Rapid drops in elevation within 2-3 hours cause the most problems for fishers, while those spread out over 10 hours or so are easier for the tribal fishers to deal with. CRITFC thanked the COE for its role a successful fishery this year.

The fall fishery will begin soon, with a potential SOR on the Aug. 27 TMT agenda.

4. Dworshak Operations

The Dworshak pool is at elevation 1,563.9 feet, with outflows of 14.5-14.6 kcfs, Steve Hall (COE) reported. About 1.8 kcfs is passing through the RO units and 9.8 kcfs through the powerhouse; the rest is going over the spillway. Current water temperature releases are 48.5-49 degrees F. The COE believes the reservoir will reach 1,535 feet elevation by the end of August, and is trying to get as much water out of the reservoir as possible now without violating the gas cap.

Tracy Schwartz (COE) discussed temperature modeling. The model assumed that every attempt would be made to get Dworshak reservoir to elevation 1,520 feet by the end of September. The model assumed outflows would remain 14 kcfs until Aug. 25, and then drop to full powerhouse until Sept. 15. Outflow temperatures would be around 47 degrees F at that time. The model also assumed that the 2002 Anatone and Orofino flow temperatures were lower than this year's, so 2008 temperatures have been shifted 2 degrees F higher from Aug. 11-30. This is considered a conservative estimate.

Dworshak outflow temperatures dropped from 50 to 47 degrees F on Aug. 8. The COE models predict that Lower Granite outflow temperatures will begin to fall off any day now, from Aug. 12-16. Wagner asked whether this model run included the predictions of high temperatures over the next few days. No, the COE has adjusted the 2002 historical data 2 degrees F upward for Anatone and Orofino inflows, Schwartz replied. A few days of high temperatures are not likely to affect the model, which is more indicative of long-term trends.

Adams directed TMT to Aug. 11 thermocline data for Dworshak forebay, which shows that water temperatures this year, especially in the lower parts of the reservoir, are significantly warmer than in previous years. Current releases are 48-49.5 degrees F with units operating in undershot mode. As time goes on and surface flows drop, cooler outflow temperatures can be expected. The pool elevation is expected to drop below the spillway elevation sometime around

Aug.22-24, meaning 12 kcfs will be lost over the spillway during that period. It is likely that 1-2 gates will have to be operated in overshot mode in order to release the outflows of 46-48 degrees F that are needed by the hatchery.

For the next week, the COE expects to keep Dworshak outflows in the 14-14.5 kcfs range, with outflow temperatures of around 50 degrees F. The COE will continue to release as close to 14.5 kcfs as it can, assuming that outflow temperatures aren't expected to vary from 48.5-49.5 degrees F.

Russ Kiefer (Idaho) pointed out that one of the lines in today's graph was mislabeled. It will be revised and reposted to the TMT page. TMT will revisit Dworshak operations on Aug. 27, with a tentative conference call scheduled for Aug. 20 if needed.

5. Libby/Hungry Horse Operations Update

a. Libby. The COE wasn't able to present graphics today because of a problem with the first 10 days of the forecast, Joel Fenolio (COE-NWS) reported. The COE is in the process of remodeling the forecasts.

Last night, Libby outflows dropped to the bull trout minimum of 8 kcfs. Inflows at the 50% exceedance level show the reservoir will reach the target elevation of 2,441.8 feet by end August. The 75% exceedance level, the most conservative estimate, shows an end of August elevation of 2,441 feet.

The Libby-Arrow swap agreement with Canada has been signed, Tony Norris (BPA) reported. Flows are on track to swap 60 ksfd, or 2.8 ft at Libby Reservoir, with a true-up during the last 10 days of August. The storage of 60 ksfd equates to an elevation of about 2.8 feet above the target 2,439 feet elevation in Libby pool. The swap will allow the Action Agencies to store at Libby what is expected and to readjust outflows at both U.S. and Canadian projects.

BPA will post the signed agreement as soon as it becomes available.

b. Hungry Horse. The current reservoir elevation is 3,549.43 feet, with 6.4-6.5 kcfs outflows. Current ESP forecasts indicate the reservoir will reach 3,540.3 feet by the end of August, and 3,540.0 feet by Sept. 1.

6. McNary Transportation Update

Trucking operations will begin Aug. 17 instead of Aug. 16 because the latter is an off-day, according to the COE's schedule of transporting every other day, Dan Feil (COE) reported.

7. Timing the End of MOP

Changing the end of MOP from end August to the beginning of September would depend on the number of adults and juveniles in the river, Paul Wagner said. FPAC has been discussing MOP operations and will continue to do so. In the past, the threshold for ending MOP has been an index count of less than 300 juveniles in the river, Norris pointed out. Last year, the end of MOP occurred around the end of August when the juvenile index count was around 100 fish. FPAC will continue to discuss this issue, including Lower Granite operations, and report back to TMT.

Scott Bettin (BPA) noted that the collection facility for adults needs a certain amount of water, so moving the MOP elevation up a foot or so might be a consideration in September. TMT will revisit MOP operations Aug. 27.

8. Operations Review

a. Reservoirs. Grand Coulee is at elevation 1,283.9 feet, headed towards 1,280 feet by the end of August. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3,549.43 feet, with outflows of 6.4-6.5 kcfs. Libby is at elevation 2,442.8 feet, or a full foot above the target elevation for end August. Inflows are 8.7 kcfs and outflows are 8.1 kcfs, so the reservoir is slowly drafting.

The Pend Oreille Hope gage is at elevation 2,062.3 feet, still passing inflows. TMT will discuss Pend Oreille operations around the middle of September at the earliest.

Dworshak is at elevation 1,564.35 feet with inflows of 2.5-3 kcfs and outflows of 14-14.5 kcfs. Seven day average inflows at Lower Granite have been 40 kcfs; at McNary, 134-135 kcfs; at Bonneville, 135 kcfs.

b. Fish. Smolt passage is currently limited to subyearlings, Wagner reported. Until recently, several thousand fish per day were passing Lower Granite, and 700 fish per day were passing Little Goose. Lower Monumental has passed less than 1,000 fish per day for most of August. This information will play into scheduling the end of MOP operations. McNary has been passing 2-8,000 fish per day, with similar counts at John Day. Bonneville has been passing 2,000 fish per day, trending down for fall Chinook season.

Fall Chinook adult passage has begun, with 5,500 fish passing Bonneville so far. This count is in line with the 10-year average. So far this year, approximately 183,000 steelhead have passed Bonneville, with a 10 year average of 160,000, or about 5-800 steelhead per day passing the lower river projects. Sockeye counts have been higher this year than in decades.

c. Power System. There was nothing to report today.

d. Water Quality. The only point of concern lately has been Bonneville spill, Adams reported. There have been exceedances at the Camas Washougal gage, so the COE has been slowly lowering the spill cap. Last night, outflows were dropped to 85 kcfs in anticipation of hot weather during the next few days.

Flows in the Snake River are approaching an operational “dead zone” where flow are such that the project must alternate between running one unit and two units in order to maintain forebay elevations in the MOP range. This means that forebay elevations may fluctuate between the MOP and MOP+1. Wagner asked, is the 40%/60% alternating spill regime at McNary following a fixed schedule, or does it depend on water availability? It’s on a fixed schedule, Adams replied.

9. Bonneville 2nd Powerhouse Corner Collector Closure

This closure is scheduled to occur on the morning of Sept. 2, Adams reported. The FOP says the corner collector can be closed anytime after midnight on Aug. 31. If the contractor is able to schedule work on Labor Day, it may do so. Richelle Beck (DRA) asked what current temperatures are at Lower Granite. The temperature dropped from 67 to 66.8 degrees F as of today, Adams replied. Temperatures are expected to fall further because of temperature changes at Dworshak that began on Aug. 8.

9. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled TMT meeting will be Aug. 27 at the COE Portland office. Review of facilitator notes and minutes; fall treaty fishing; Dworshak, Libby/Hungry Horse, and Lower Granite operations; the end of MOP; and the standard operations review will be on the agenda. A conference call was tentatively scheduled for Aug. 20 if needed to discuss changes in Dworshak operations. This summary prepared by consultant and writer Pat Vivian.

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